

Again After the America Cup

The Most Famous Sporting Trophy in the World

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THE AMERICA CUP

Won in 1851 by the yacht America and held ever since in this country. The fourteenth race for this cup will be held in 1920.

SIXTY-NINE years ago someone in England wrote to someone in America and "wondered" why the New York Yacht Club did not muster up sufficient sporting blood to send over a yacht and enter the international matches which were to be one of the attractions of the World's Fair about to be held in London.

It is doubtful if anyone today knows who wrote or who received that letter, but the result of that one sentence has

been thirteen yacht races for a little silver cup, with the fourteenth race scheduled for 1920 and, what is far greater, proof that the British are good sports.

This cup was made in England to be won by English yachtsmen. But no English yachtsman ever won it! Since 1851 this cup has remained in this country and is known the world over as the America Cup.

The fourteenth race was scheduled for the fall of 1914 but the war prevented this. Sir Thomas Lipton had already lost three races with his yachts Shamrock I, II, and III, and had sailed his Shamrock IV across for the next race. It has been in drydock in Brooklyn ever since. Recently the Royal Ulster Yacht Club issued a formal challenge to the New York Yacht Club. This race will not take place until next year.

The history of the America Cup is far more than one of thirteen defeats for British yachtsmen. It is a history of friendships cemented, a history of clean sport and a history of so much money spent in yacht building for these events that the few who know the actual amount do not care to make it public.

The America Cup is not an especially artistic example of the silversmith's craft, but to American yachtsmen it is about the most beautiful thing they ever beheld. The value of the cup is one hundred guineas, or \$504.

It has cost fully a million dollars to build the yachts for some of the races. The most conservative estimate places the expenditure at more than \$6,000,000, and some yachtsmen assert that if all expenditures were known and totaled the outgo would really be twice that figure.

British subjects and Americans alike have spent money freely for this clean sport, and friendships have grown out of it that have resulted in more good for both countries than can ever be told.

THE mysterious letter written so long ago fell into the hands of some members of the then rather "young" New York Yacht Club. John C. Stevens, first commodore of the club, and his fellow members decided at once that they *did* possess "sufficient sporting blood," with the result that one bright August morning in 1851 a strange yacht appeared off the coast of the Isle of Wight and anchored six miles outside the harbor. The fast English cutter Lavercock sailed out to "speak it" and learned that it was the yacht America, New York Yacht Club, commanded by Commodore John C. Stevens which had sailed across the Atlantic to take part in the international "matches."

Commodore Stevens made a mistake. He beat the fast cutter Lavercock into Cowes, which not only astonished the Englishmen but made them wary of wagering on the race. Otherwise these American yachtsmen might have brought home many thousand pounds sterling as well as the little cup.

Commodore Stevens was astonished to learn that it was not to be a race with any single yacht but against all comers of from 47 to 392 tons! But the Commodore was a good sport; he entered the race with fourteen yachts and sailed around the Isle of Wight, a distance of sixty miles.

That little yacht America won the cup but did not bring it back because the yacht was sold to English sportsmen. The Commodore, however, brought back the cup in another craft. The New York Yacht Club had then been organized but seven years and it was only

forty-nine years before that event that the first pleasure yacht in America was built. The America had an interesting history. The English purchasers won many local races with it. They really bought it to study the lines of our designers. It was sold to the Southern Confederacy for a blockade runner, sunk in the St. John River, raised after the war and purchased by General Butler.

Nineteen years later people began to say that an Englishman "knew when he was licked." They declared that our cousins across the sea would not try another race with us.

People say many things that cannot be reconciled with the truth. Fortunately, for the glory of England, James Ashbury of the Royal Thames Yacht Club built in 1870 the Cambria and came over to take back the cup. His trip over was a noted sporting event for he raced across the pond with James Gordon Bennett's yacht Dauntless, beating her by a distance as far as one sailing vessel can sight another at sea.

The Cambria had to sail against all comers, as did the America. Twenty-one famous American yachts entered. The little Magic, in poor position, got away first by superior handling and kept the lead, beating the Cambria by 39 minutes 12 7-10 seconds. This was the last race in which a challenger had to sail against a fleet.

But the English came back the very next year, Mr. Ashbury bringing over the Livonia of the Royal Harwich Yacht Club. The winner of the four out of seven races was to take the cup. Then we began to select yachts and race them, the winner to race the challenger. The Columbia, Sappho, Palmer and

lanta by way of the Oswego and Erie Canal and down the Hudson, it being necessary to get her through the locks almost on beam's end. Our little yacht Mischief won the first two races and the cup remained with us.

In 1885 Boston yachtsmen gave proof that they were quite as clever as New York yachtsmen. J. Malcom Forbes and General Charles Paine of the Eastern Yacht Club ordered Edward Burgess to build the yacht Puritan.

They smiled over it at the New York Yacht Club. "Whoever heard of Burgess? He may design good catboats, but a yacht—?"

The N. Y. Y. C. members really enjoyed the situation and Messrs. Bennett and Douglas had the yacht Priscilla built.

The winning yacht was to have the honor of defending the cup. When word was flashed that Boston's Puritan had defeated New York's Priscilla in the tryout, New York yachtsmen declared that the Priscilla must have broken something.

"What's broken?" they asked.

"The hearts of the N. Y. Y. C. members," came the reply.

SIR RICHARD SUTTON brought over the Genesta for this race. On September 8, 1885, the Puritan and Genesta collided in a foul while maneuvering for a get-away after they had officially started the race. It was the fault of the Puritan's commander and the regatta committee directed the Genesta to sail over the course alone and take the race, which was quite her right.

"I thank you, gentlemen," said Sir Richard, "but I came across the ocean for a real race, not a 'sailover'."

That was the spirit of the English sportsman. Six days later the Puritan won by 16 minutes 19 seconds. Two days after that the Puritan won by 2 minutes 9 seconds and by corrected time, 1 minute 38 seconds, the closest race ever sailed.

A year later another Boston shipbuilder, named Lawley, built the Mayflower. Again people wanted to know "who ever heard of him?"

The Mayflower defeated the English yacht Galatea.

Then the Scotchmen decided they would show England what was what, and built the Thistle. This yacht was defeated by our Volunteer, the first iron yacht ever built.

There was nothing stirring for six years, when that excellent sportsman, Lord Dunraven, came across with his Valkyrie, which was in reality Valkyrie II. Our yacht Vigilant defeated him. In 1895 he tried again with Valkyrie III and our yacht Defender defeated him.

Four years later the Irish decided that since neither England, Scotland, nor Canada could defeat American yachtsmen, it was up to them to do so.

"The Lord loves the Irish but he doesn't give us much money," the yachtsmen mourned. Sir Thomas Lipton, the famous multi-millionaire tea merchant, was present. He agreed to build a yacht. He did this, naming it Shamrock, and lost the race to our yacht Columbia in 1899. In 1901 his Shamrock II lost again to our Columbia. In 1903 his Shamrock III lost to our yacht Reliance.

Then there was a wait of eleven years. Arrangements were made, the Shamrock IV was built and brought over. But the war came and so there was another wait of five years. And so next year, for the first time in seventeen years, there's to be another race for the America Cup.

If they lose perhaps the Welsh will try. Why not? The English, Scotch, Canadian and Irish have failed thus far.

But if Sir Thomas Lipton loses, one thing is certain, those Britishers will come back.

Take the 1886 race between the Mayflower and the Galatea, as an example. That one race cost American yachtsmen a million dollars. And costs have been steadily increasing.

In some of the races there was no expense, as the yachts were not built for the occasion; in some races two or three yachts were built to try out, the winner to defend the cup. And so the estimate that more than six million dollars has been spent in twelve races defending a \$504 silver cup won in 1851 is decidedly conservative.

But we have forged stronger links of friendship with our English cousins, we have proved by this long test that the British are real sports, and there are to be found a great many people over here who will say: "I'd kinder like to see the Britishers win that cup this time."



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A CUP WINNER

The yacht Reliance that won the international yacht race in 1903, against Sir Thomas Lipton's Shamrock III.

Dauntless tried out and the Columbia was used. She won the first two races, lost her flying jib and broke her steering gear in the third when the Livonia won. The Sappho took the place of the Columbia and won the next two races.

Nearly five years passed when the Canadians believed they should just step in and take that cup, thus showing the world that they were superior yachtsmen to both America and their mother country. The Royal Canadian Yacht Club sent the yacht Countess of Dufferin around from Quebec in twenty days, overhauled her and refitted her so that she was known as the "Yankee yacht built in Canada." The race was to be the best two out of the three. Our yacht Medeleine won the first two. The Canadians are good sports. They did not give up. In 1881 they sent the yacht At-